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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/640,437	08/17/2000	James Crouthamel	MBHB00-488	5131

25541 7590 09/13/2002

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EXAMINER

BONDERER, DAVID A

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3625

DATE MAILED: 09/13/2002

#6

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/640,437

Applicant(s)

CROUTHAMEL ET AL

Examiner

D. Austin Bonderer

Art Unit

3625

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 17 August 2000.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-34 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-34 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) 4.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other:

Art Unit: 3625

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. Claims 1-34 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fields et al.

Fields discloses a search interface for distributed database comprising:

- Exchanging data between a two different sites using different formats;
- A translator;
- Exchange of data;
- Converting the data;
- Linking of users through one site via another site;
- Storing the transactions; and
- Promotions.

Fields lacks the use of an independent site for processing, storing, charging, and converting data. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to perform all these functions on an independent site, since it has been held that constructing a formerly integral structure in various elements involves only routine skill in the art. *Nerwin v.*

Erlichman, 168 USPQ 177, 179.

It is also an obvious design choice at the time of the invention to provide Fields with a step to charge for the services provided. Income is an obvious motivation.

Art Unit: 3625

3. Claims 1-34 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the disclosure of the applicant.

The applicant discloses a known method comprising:

- Merchants that build mini storefronts on other's website;
- The converting of data into compatible formats back and forth;
- Charging; and
- Keeping track of transaction data.

The meat of the current invention is the automation of a known process.

It was known at the time of the invention that merely providing an automatic means to replace a manual activity which accomplishes the same result is not sufficient to distinguish over the prior art, *In re Venner*, 262 F.2d 91, 95, 120 USPQ 193, 194 (CCPA 1958). For example, simply automating the step of converting data gives you just what you would expect from the manual steps as shown in the disclosure. In other words there is no enhancement found in the claimed step. The claimed invention only provides automating the manual activity. The end result is the same as compared to the manual method. A computer can simply iterate the steps faster. The result is the same.

It would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to automate the data conversions and recording of the data transactions because this would speed up the process, which is purely known, and an expected result from automation of what is known in the art.

Also, It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to make the converter a separate location, since it has been held that constructing a

Art Unit: 3625

formerly integral structure in various elements involves only routine skill in the art. *Nerwin v. Erlichman*, 168 USPQ 177, 179.

Conclusion

4. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Inala et al., Pepe et al., and Feilds '655 disclose types of methods. Call discloses an intermediate site that stores data and is used by the deferent sites to translate and product code into information that is displayed on a users computer.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to D. Austin Bonderer whose telephone number is 703.306.5911. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday- Thursday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Wynn W Coggins can be reached on 703.308.1344. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are 703.305.7687 for regular communications and 703.305.7687 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703.308.113.

dab 
September 6, 2002